University announces research program to comply with 2020 reaccreditation

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NEWS WRITER

Joseph Savoie, Ph.D., President of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, announced the beginning of a new university program in an email to the student body on Tuesday, Jan 21.

"Three years ago, we began the process of identifying a quality enhancement plan for the 2020 reaccreditation. Extensive discussions among key stakeholders have led to our new QEP [Quality Enhancement Plan] – Advance: Student Research Experience," Savoie said. Savoie went on to describe Advance and its intentions.

"Advance is an undergraduate research program that aims to provide every student an opportunity to complete creative and scholarly projects that are valued by their respective disciplines," he said. "These Student Research Experiences will enable undergraduates to hone skills that will benefit them throughout their lifetimes: problem-solving, oral and written communication, teamwork, and project and time management."

Also according to Savoie, the last QEP resulted in the UNIV 100 classes that all incoming freshmen must take in order to become accustomed to college life and structure.

The university also included two videos with its announcement of the incoming Advance program.

One video provides success-related buzzwords watermarked over scenes from a typical day around the University.

The other video provides more information on the program, including testimonies from students, faculty and administrators.

"Advance: Student Research Experience is UL Lafayette's Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP. The QEP was devised by a team of faculty, staff, and student representatives," April Pruitt, a biology major, said.

Pruitt also commented on the intention of the new program coming to the university:

"And its goal is really to increase and improve the student research experience here at UL Lafayette through a variety of ways, one being a university-wide effort for a research supportive curriculum; another would be using the library and its resources to help students to understand how to research," Pruitt said. "It also tries to highlight student research experiences, as well as acknowledge student success in research."

One UL Lafayette professor, Emily Sandoz, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology, shared her thoughts on Advance.

"I'm actually really excited about the student Advance Research Experience," said Sandoz. "It's an experience for — that we want to offer — any student that is interested to have the opportunity to make a contribution to their field."

In addition to faculty, thoughts from the administration were included.

"Availability of undergraduate research experiences has always been something that our faculty has taken great pride in," Jamie Ebert, Ph.D., the provost and vice president for academic affairs, said. "This is taking that piece of our academic profile — our academic being and formalizing it, institutionalizing it, and making it an integral part of who we will be as we progress into the future."

Savoie concluded his address to the student body by sharing his hope for the future of the university.

"By fostering insightful scholarship and encouraging active research among undergraduates, Advance is an investment in their futures — and in ours," he said. "I'm excited to see what tomorrow holds as a result of this ambitious initiative."